



## SoCal Enjoys Chinmaya Garba

Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles, held a large annual Navaratri Raas Garba on Oct. 7 at University High School, here. The event began with devotees participating in a Devi puja, led by the Southern California head of the organization, Swami Ishwarananda. As the evening went forward, the hall filled with joyous dancers wearing sparkling Gujarati style saris while the younger ones came in the latest lehengas and kurtas. Everyone moved to the beat of the music provided by Jayshree Gohil and party. Even as the evening drew to a close, several participants were reluctant to go home, still energetic for a few hours more!



## Diwali Celebrated in the Valley Balvihars

The San Fernando and Canejo Valley balvihars celebrated Diwali with a Sri Ganesh and Laxmi puja. Children and adults chanted the slokas together. Balvihar children also enjoyed creating delightful craft projects for the festival. Everyone then participated in mahaprasad, which was brought in by several families.



## Sankalpa For Asia Yatra Held

Swami Ishwarananda who will be leading a group of yatis from Nov.23 to Cambodia, Bali and Thailand to visit ancient as well as practicing sites of Hinduism, led a sankalpa puja, a month in advance at Rameshwaram. Swamiji, before the onset of each holy trip, asks all yatis to invoke the grace of Hanumanji and follow certain procedures of mind and body purification to prepare the traveler for the spiritual journey. He performed Hanuman Puja, reciting verses from 'Hanuman Chalisa' for each step of the 'shodasha-upachar puja' and initiated all yatis to get prepared for the pilgrimage. Yatis who have been on these tours with him, often speak of remarkable darshans and unhindered visits.

## New Families Attend Orientation, Hear Positives of BV Program



Over 70 new families have enrolled in the CMLA balvihars at Rameshwaram and the various satellite centers and, on Oct.22, they were given orientation by Acharya Mahadevji and Swami Ishwarananda. CMLA member and balvihar coordinator Shobha along with her husband Ravikumar welcomed the newcomers to Rameshwaram and CMLA and shared their experience as long time balvihar parents. They also spoke of the challenges as volunteers as well as the great moments of inspiration that such activity begets.

Acharya Mahadevji led the audience down memory lane speaking to them about the initial days of CMLA balvihar - the mid-80s - which was spearheaded by him and wife Viji Mahadev. He highlighted the enthusiastic nudge he received from Pujya Gurudev to start CMLA balvihar. CHYK member Shiva Sharma pointed out that the years spent in balvihar would not go in vain for the kids, narrating the predicaments he faced as a youth in college and the resolutions he was able to make thanks to his training at CMLA's balvihar program and training.

Finally, Swamiji explained the spirit behind the Chinmaya Mission Pledge and how it provides a positive vision for every member who recites it every week. The event concluded with dinner prasad served with love by CMLA volunteers.

## Narasimha Rao Kanamarlapudip Passes Away

It is his ever ready smile that everyone at Chinmaya Mission remembers.

Narasimha Rao was known for his zest for life and lending a helping and steady hand for anyone who wanted it. On Oct.14, that smile and wisdom took a rest from the world with Rao breathing his last after a heart attack.

He is survived by his wife Lakshmi and daughter Saritha who is in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade and a balvihar student. An only child, Narasimha Rao is survived also by his grieving mother.

At the funeral held at the Harbor Lawn Mt.Olive Memorial Park & Mortuary family and friends from the Telugu community spoke highly of their association with him. Chinmaya Mission members reminded the gathering again and again of his invaluable contributions in starting the Telugu language class from the early days at 'Kasi' when only a few students would attend, to the popular one it has now become.



Swami Ishwarananda, who was traveling, and in the message he sent to the Rao family said, he would never forget how Narasimha Rao would always laughingly tell him to come to Telugu class so he could get his Telugu pronunciations right!

Others talked about Rao's light spirit when he joined in whole heartedly to act in a humorous play enacted by adults for the annual family day. Acharya Mahadevji remembered Rao's involvement with the Shruti group and reminded Lakshmi and Saritha again, that CMLA would indeed 'stand as one family' with them.

Narasimha Rao had a Ph.D in biochemistry from the world renowned All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, worked at Rush Presbyterian Medical Center in Chicago and for ICN Pharmaceuticals in Costa Mesa and later as a consultant for pharmaceutical industries.